



Anti-Bullying Policy

The Bible teaches that all humans are created equal and in the image of God. We are all created with dignity and worth, *"you have...crowned him with glory and honour."* (Psalm 8vs5). We are all precious in God's eyes, *"even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."* (Matthew 10:30). We are, therefore, to treat one another with respect, consideration and in the manner that we would wish to be treated ourselves. *"Love your neighbour as yourself."* (Mark 12:31).

The serious nature of bullying and the damage it can do is reflected in government policy. DCSF guidance "Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools – Jul 2011" has been consulted.

What is Bullying?

Bullying can be physical or mental. It can be unkind and intentional. It can be thoughtless and unintentional. It can be face to face or at a distance using note writing, texting and the internet. You can be a bully and not know it but when you feel bullied you certainly know it.

Bullying may take various forms:

- physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings.
- verbal – name calling, teasing, insulting, making offensive remarks, references to sexuality or sexual activities, disparaging references to race or gender.
- social – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumors.
- cyberbullying – bullying via mobile phone or online (e.g. e-mail, social networks and instant messenger).

Bullying is often aimed at certain groups and relates to specific reasons. These include racial bullying, homophobic bullying and disability related bullying.

Bullying is deliberately hurtful and repeated over a period of time, and victims often find it difficult to defend themselves against it.

Preventing bullying

The Bible teaches that we live in a fallen and sinful world, and to some extent, therefore, bullying is present in all schools. However, the teachers at Immanuel Christian School are committed to providing an environment which enables pupils to learn successfully, play happily and feel valued and secure. This involves pupils of all ages learning to get on well together, showing kindness to one another and respecting one another. Preventing bullying in the first place is obviously better than dealing with instances of bullying and preventative measures will take two forms.

Firstly, children should be taught to:

- See each other as God sees them
- Be sensitive to the needs of others.
- Treat others with kindness.

- Look for ways to be useful and helpful to others.
- Celebrate the achievements and good qualities of others.
- Speak encouraging words that build up others rather than putting them down.
- Be forgiving.
- Accept individuality and diversity in people.

Secondly teachers should:

- Be vigilant.
- Be diligent in their general supervision and also keep their ears and eyes open with regard to issues of bullying both in the classroom and in the playground. Bullying can often take place in a variety of places, e.g. corridors, classrooms, playground, toilets or on the way to and from school.
- Keep an eye on new pupils who have transferred from other schools, as they may be vulnerable to bullying, or may have had bad experiences in their previous schools, which may lead them to be extra sensitive. Encourage pupils to befriend them, possibly appointing another child as a mentor.
- Continually remind pupils of the teaching points listed above.
- Report any concerns to the Head Teacher who has overall responsibility for pupils.
- Use the PSHE & SRE curriculum and school assemblies to promote wise and biblical attitudes, behaviour and speech.

The school will provide training to teachers to help them identify and deal with bullying.

What parents can do

- Discourage your child from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere. Show them how to resolve the difficult situations without using violence or aggression.
- Watch out for signs that your child is being bullied or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect that a problem exists. Don't dismiss it. Contact the School if you are worried.

Signs of bullying

The signs below do not necessarily mean that a child is being bullied, but if repeated or occurring in combination, they may warrant investigation.

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness or refusal to attend school.
- Deterioration in educational performance.
- Patterns of physical illness.
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour, especially after a weekend or a holiday.
- Visible signs of anxiety or stress.
- Losing or having damaged possessions.
- Increased requests for money or stealing.
- Unexplained bruises, cuts or damaged clothing.

If your child has been bullied

- Calmly talk with your child about his/her experience and listen to them.
- Make a note of what your child says – particularly who was said to be involved, how often the bullying has occurred, where it happened and what has happened.
- Reassure your child that they have done the right thing to tell you about the bullying.
- Pray with your child.
- Explain to your child that should any further incidents occur, they should report them to a teacher immediately.

Talking with the School about bullying

- Try to stay calm - bear in mind that there are usually two sides to every story.
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened – give dates, places and names of other children involved.

- Make a note of what action the school intends to take.
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school.
- Stay in touch with the school. Let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue.

If your child is bullying other children

Many children may be involved in bullying other pupils at some time or other. Often parents are not aware that their child is involved in bullying.

Children sometimes bully others because:

- They don't know it's wrong.
- They are copying older brothers or sisters or other people in the family whom they admire.
- They haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their school friends.
- Their friends encourage them to bully.
- They are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings.

To stop your child from bullying others

- Talk with your child and listen to them. Explain that what they are doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy.
- Pray with your child.
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want.
- Show your child how they can join in with other children without bullying.
- Make an appointment to visit the School to explain the problems your child is experiencing. Discuss how you and the School can stop them bullying others.
- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school.
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to other people.

Taking Action

If an incident of bullying is suspected, it should be reported at the earliest opportunity to the class teacher who should not prematurely jump to conclusions, but should investigate the report to determine its truth by:

- Talking to the victim of the bullying to determine its extent and the number of people involved.
- Talking to other members of the class who may verify the victim's story or belie it as the case may be.
- Talking to the alleged bullies to see if there is another side to the story.

When talking with someone who claims to have been bullied or their parents, members of staff should be clear about:

- What has happened.
- How often it has happened.
- Who was involved.
- Who saw what was happening.
- Where it happened.
- What they have done about it already.

Make written notes based on all conversations with pupils and parents.

Some claims may turn out to be exaggerated. However, whatever the victim's previous history, all claims of bullying should be investigated.

If the report is thought to be true, the class teacher should:

- Liaise with the parents of the victim in order to ascertain if they can shed further light on the incident.
- Reassure the child and the parents that the issue is being taken seriously and that appropriate action will be taken.

- Report the matter to the Head Teacher.
- Ask the bullies to repent, yet warn the bullies of the possible consequences of their actions both to themselves, to the victim of the bullying, and to their future in the school.
- Seek to repair the relationship between the bullies and their victim.
- Look into the possibility of involving other pupils in the class to befriend and support the victim and maintain the dialogue with the victim and the bullies until the bullying has come to an end.
- When the case has been dealt with then the parent should be informed of the outcome and their continued input should be encouraged to ensure that the problem does not occur again.
- It is essential that each incident be followed up to check that the bullying has not started again. If pupils expect follow up, they are less likely to re-offend. Immediately after intervention, the bullying is likely to stop but may recur some time later. This follow up should be about two weeks after the incident and then a further four weeks later. During this period there should be regular contact with the parents to make sure that the bullying has not started again. There should also be regular reminders to the class as a whole to remind them that bullying is sin.

If the bullying persists

The bully will be excluded from contact with other pupils for a period of time (usually a week). If the bullying still persists, then the bully will be suspended from school for a period of time (from three days to a week).

At each stage, a dialogue will be maintained with the parents of the respective pupils and the class will be reminded about the issue of bullying and its consequences.

Parents of pupils who persist in bullying after all of the above have been implemented will be asked to find another school for their child, after consultation with representatives of the Governing Body.

The school's duty of care to prevent bullying only applies within the boundaries of the school. The school is not legally responsible to prevent bullying off the premises. However, bullying may take place outside of the school premises, and on journeys to and from school, by pupils of this or other schools. In such instances the school will support pupils and parents as required and will instigate safeguarding procedures if applicable.

The school in this case should discuss the matter with the parents to see what can be done to reduce the possibility of further bullying, for example, by making some alternative provision for the journey to and from school.

Evaluating the Bullying Policy

Accurate records of the incidents will be kept by the Head Teacher in a file designated solely for this purpose. This data should be compiled from monitoring and feedback from pupils, parents and staff. It should be used to monitor the effectiveness of the bullying policy and inform the Governing Body who will review the policy as and when necessary but at least once every two years.

Immanuel Christian School
 Anti-Bullying Policy – version 2
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